



# Hon. Robert T. Matsui

## Member of Congress

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*Robert T. Matsui*  
Serving California's 5th District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Thursday, October 10, 2002

CONTACT: CODY HARRIS  
(202) 225-7163/(202) 225-0564

### MATSUI SUPPORTS SPRATT RESOLUTION, OPPOSES PREMATURE CONGRESSIONAL AUTHORIZATION FOR WAR

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, the House of Representatives voted on the authorization for use of military force against Iraq. Congressman Robert T. Matsui (D-CA) voted for an amendment offered by John Spratt (D-SC). The Spratt amendment authorized the President to continue his efforts to build a global coalition to deal with the threat posed by Saddam Hussein, but should those efforts fail, request that the President return to Congress for a second vote on the use of military force after all diplomatic efforts had been exhausted. Rep. Matsui voted against a resolution that would have prematurely authorized the use of force against Iraq.

#### **Rep. Matsui made the following statement:**

“Mr. Speaker, the United States is both blessed and burdened with enormous power. We have a responsibility to our constituents, to our country, and to the world, to ensure that the United States wields this power wisely.

“That’s why I rise today in support of an amendment offered by Representative Spratt of South Carolina, which recognizes the threat posed by Iraq and ensures that Congress deals with this threat appropriately. This amendment challenges the United Nations to live up to its responsibilities by forcing Iraq to abide by its commitments to the international community. It places value in multilateral action, but also recognizes the reality that sometimes the United States must be prepared to act alone. This is an amendment that each of us can support with a clear conscience.

“The amendment encourages the President to continue working with the U.N. to craft a tough Security Council Resolution that leaves no room for Saddam Hussein to delay or impede weapons inspections on his territory, under the threat of immediate multilateral force.

“Should the U.N. shirk or fail in its duty, Congress should then consider, in an expedited fashion, the authorization of force to be used against Iraq. That way, we will vote with the full knowledge that all diplomatic efforts have indeed failed. It is at that time and at that time alone, that we, as Members of Congress entrusted with the solemn and terrible duty to send our young men and women to war, should be called upon to cast that vote. In short, Congress should vote to authorize force when and only when there is no other option.

“We are fortunate to have before us the opportunity to craft a sensible and responsible policy for the United States, one that reflects, I believe, the very reasonable view of the majority of Americans. Americans are not hungry for war. We do not seek conflict, but neither do we shrink from our responsibilities. We will go to war only when we must – but not a moment before.

“But now Congress is faced with a vote on a resolution that asks us to authorize a war that may not be necessary at this particular time. That’s not how Congress has dealt with issues of war and peace in the past, and there’s no reason to violate that precedent now. A premature authorization of force is inconsistent with the traditions of the Congress and the character of this nation.

“Mr. Speaker, we can and must act to deal with the threat posed by Saddam Hussein. But Congress should not grant this authority prematurely, nor should we seek to do so. The Spratt amendment treats this matter with the gravity and circumspection it deserves. I urge my colleagues to consider carefully the alternatives before them, to vote yes for the Spratt amendment, and no on the majority resolution.”

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